

EYES FOR EAST AFRICA (UK)
REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 1053222
SPRING 2001 NEWSLETTER

PATIENT NUMBERS

Since opening in 1993 patient numbers have increased dramatically:-

1994 700 new patients and 72 surgical operations

1995 1,279 new patients and 155 surgical operations

1996 1,556 new patients and 194 surgical operations

1997 1,534 new patients and 148 surgical operations (numbers reduced due to this years unrest in Kwale)

1998 2,219 new patients and 263 surgical operations

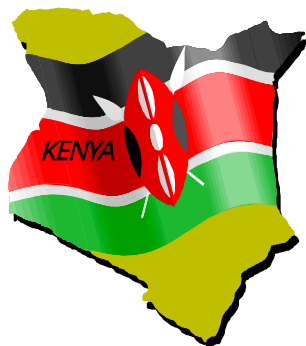
1999 2,754 new patients and 398 surgical operations

2000 3,057 new patients and 695 surgical operations

**THE FUTURE OF
KWALE DISTRICT EYE
CENTRE**

KDEC is dealing with an ever-growing number of people in each of its departments. They need to increase their infrastructure and human resource development to meet this need effectively. Their priority is to build a hostel so that men and women no longer have to share accommodation. They then want to build a new outpatient department to cope with the increasing flow of patients. Once this is done they then need to alter the theatre area to make more sterilisation, and laundry facilities more efficient.

In order to keep the enthusiasm and awareness about eye care in their community going they need to continue to plan meetings, approach village health committees and be out and about in the community. They need to



recruit and train a low vision therapist. His/her job will be to concentrate on children with low vision, integrating them into normal education, visiting them at school, at home and helping them and those around them overcome their disability as best as possible and be accepted as a contributing member of society.

**THIS IS A TRUE STORY
WRITTEN BY A
MEMBER OF THE EYE
CENTRE STAFF**

It is an account of an individual patient who they have helped, and is reproduced as written to preserve the authenticity and atmosphere of the area. Before we are tempted to be critical of the English involved, let's bear in mind the fact that in Africa one's first language is one's mother tongue of the tribe (Luo, Kikuyu etc.) and there are many of these. The second language is Kiswahili and the third English, so most Africans speak three languages and English is their third.

**'When The Eye Talked'
by Kia Kafahanu.**

In Miamba Village of Mkongam location, Kwale

District, there lives a man called Kithereso Ndegwa. Kithereso lived a happy life and with good sight since birth until he was 60 years old. Then he started losing his vision. Sensing danger, he visited many traditional healers one after the other, male and female, slaughtering goats and chickens in a desperate move to have his sight restored. Finally when he was 70, Kithereso lost his sight completely. He continued to believe that he had been bewitched and had lost his battle against witchcraft. He lived in his small hut with his wife and children who cooked, bathed him, guided him. His family members, believing Kithereso to have been cursed, blamed and hated most of their neighbours. They believed He thought that they were envious of his hard work in the farm which brought him enough food and some income for the family. Kithereso and his family did not talk to any of the neighbours and became an isolated family in desperation. Kithereso himself was almost becoming dumb as he did not talk to anyone unless he was asking for help from his family members and he was weak as he did not go out of his house unless he was going to the toilet. On 11 September 2000 when Kithereso was 78 years old luck knocked on his door. Kwale District Eye Centre, through its Community Based Programme, conducted an Outreach Clinic in Mtsamviani Village 10 Kilometres from Kithereso's home. Kithereso was taken to the outreach clinic by his son

aged 12 years. The cause of his blindness was diagnosed at cataract. Kithereso was transported to KDEC for surgery after proper